

GONKING, JAMES G.

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CONTEMPORARIES

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Abraham Lincoln's Contemporaries

James Conkling

Excerpts from newspapers and other
sources

From the files of the
Lincoln Financial Foundation Collection

Until more is known about Kelley's constituent, the precise identification of the medal will remain in doubt. However, some modest conclusions can be drawn at this point. Both of the medals described above reveal Pennsylvania's obsession with the tariff, a preoccupation which Abraham Lincoln understood very well. In January of 1861, when President-elect Lincoln decided to offer the position as Secretary of the Treasury to Ohio's Salmon P. Chase rather than Pennsylvania's Simon Cameron, he explained to a political confidante, "But then comes the danger that the protectionists of Pennsylvania will be dissatisfied." Only the medals from Pennsylvania (and one the source of which is unknown) stress "Protection." Others deal with Union or free soil. It seems fitting that "Pig Iron" Kelley should have been midwife to the birth of such campaign materials.

It is instructive, too, to note the primitive state of campaign financing. Kelley was willing to pay out of his own pocket for the production of a photograph to aid the Philadelphia medal-maker. In fact, the nature of campaigning itself was not yet a matter of predictable public-relations techniques. Norman Judd served in the Illinois Senate from 1844 to 1860 and was a political wire-puller of long standing. Lincoln knew Judd's abilities very well, and, when he was having difficulty with excluding Cameron from his cabinet, he had "a great notion to post Judd fully in this matter, and get him to visit Washington, and in his quiet way, try to adjust it satisfactorily." As Chairman of Illinois's Republican State Central Committee and a member of the Republican National Committee from 1856 to 1861, Judd was a politician's politician, a man who surely knew how to run a campaign. Yet even Judd instructed Lincoln to see to the "picture proposition" largely as a favor to Kelley and was just "coming to believe, that likenesses broad cast, are excellent means of electioneering."

Historians are a little like Judd in that they are just coming to realize the significance of a broad range of campaign materials. Medals do have some political content; in 1860, Pennsylvania's campaign medals mentioned protection — others did not. Still, it is the general lack of content in such materials that is revealing. Judd, Lincoln, and Kelley attended to the medal matter in the crush of other important political business. Though historians stress issues in their studies of politicians, the politicians often preferred not to. Issues are divisive. Medals and pictures are not. Politicians ran "hurrah" campaigns, not debates on political science, and the great abundance of "hurrah" campaign ephemera is the best proof of the politicians' preferences.



From the Louis A. Warren
Lincoln Library and Museum

FIGURE 9. William Darrah Kelley.

LINCOLN AUTOGRAPHED DEBATES: A COPY PRESENTED BUT NOT SIGNED

Editor's Note: I am indebted to Grant Talbot Dean of the Chicago Historical Society for informing me of the existence of the book discussed in this article.

The Chicago Historical Society owns an interesting copy of the *Political Debates Between Hon. Abraham Lincoln and Hon. Stephen A. Douglas in the Celebrated Campaign of 1858, in Illinois* which bears this inscription: "James C. Conkling/Presented by/A Lincoln/April 7 1860." Harry E. Pratt did not list this copy in "Lincoln Autographed Debates," *Manuscripts*, VI (Summer, 1954).

James Cook Conkling (1816-1899) was a likely recipient of a free copy of Lincoln's book. Born in New York City, Conkling graduated from Princeton and settled in Springfield in 1838. Politics, profession, and matrimony soon forged a Lincoln-Conkling friendship. Conkling was, like Lincoln, a lawyer and a Whig in politics. In 1841, he married Mercy Ann Levering, the "Dearest Merce" of Mary Todd (Lincoln's) earliest known letters. In fact, Conkling's letters provide one of the more important sources for the Todd-Lincoln courtship, the gay social life of early Springfield, and the early appearance of Abraham Lincoln.

Conkling was a politician of some local prominence, being elected mayor of Springfield in 1844 and to the Illinois House of Representatives in 1851. Like Lincoln, Conkling became a Republican. He campaigned for Lincoln in Pennsylvania in 1860. When Lincoln became President, Conkling occasionally visited Washington as agent to handle Federal accounts for the State of Illinois. In 1862, he used his friendship with the President as an avenue to press for the selection of Mackinaw City rather than Michilimackinaw as a spot to be fortified for the protection of the Great Lakes. Conkling cited a number of arguments about the relative military advantages of the two sites, but he also admitted that he had invested some \$18,000 in Mackinaw City over the previous five years.

Students of Lincoln's Presidency know Conkling principally for his invitation to Lincoln to speak at a mass rally in Illinois on September 3, 1863. Conkling hoped that Lincoln would make a personal appearance, but from the start Lincoln leaned towards sending a letter to be read at the rally. Conkling, whom Lincoln thought "one of the best public readers" he knew, read the famous letter at the rally. Lincoln had cautioned him: "Read it very slowly." The letter defended the administration's policies of emancipation and arming Negroes as the best ways militarily to save the Union. Conkling was an ardent antislavery man, and he complimented the letter and hoped for the day when military success would leave "no question as to the condition and rights of 'American citizens of African descent.'"

Conkling wanted to visit Europe, and, in the summer of 1864, he pressed Lincoln for a European appointment. The President gave Conkling an introduction to Secretary of State William H. Seward, but nothing came of it. Conkling nevertheless continued to work hard for Lincoln's reelection and spurned the third-party movements which lured some other antislavery liberals away from Lincoln's camp. When Lincoln won reelection, Conkling pressed again for a European appointment, but the result was the same as in the previous summer.

There is no doubt of Lincoln's close personal relationship with Conkling. He referred to him at various times during the Civil War as "entirely trustworthy," as "my personal friend of long standing," as "a good man," and as "a particular friend & fellow townsman." Yet the Conkling presentation copy of the *Debates* is not autographed by Lincoln. Harry Pratt missed the Conkling copy, but he did note two similar unsigned presentation copies. John H. Littlefield, once a student in the Lincoln-Herndon law office, wrote in his copy: "J.H. Littlefield From A. Lincoln, April 25, 1860." And Charles J. Sellon, an Illinois newspaper editor, wrote in his: "Chas. J. Sellon Presented by Hon A. Lincoln." The inscription in the Chicago Historical Society copy is in Conkling's hand. It is written in ink; Lincoln wrote in ink in only one of the nineteen known copies he signed. It is dated; Lincoln dated only one of the copies he signed. The early April date would be approximately the time Lincoln first received his one hundred copies of the book from the publisher, and Lincoln was in Springfield on April 7th. Like Littlefield and Sellon, James Conkling failed to have Lincoln sign his copy of this famous book.



Lincoln Lore

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Number 1699

LINCOLN'S SPRINGFIELD FRIENDS: FRIENDS OF THE NEGRO

On June 24, 1847, Benjamin Bond offered a resolution to the Illinois Constitutional Convention "to report a provision prohibiting free negroes from emigrating into this State, and that no person shall bring slaves into this State from other States and set them free." Bond's motion eventually became Article 14 of the Illinois Constitution. Abraham Lincoln was not a member of the constitutional convention, and, since he assumed his seat in the United States House of Representatives in December, he was not in Springfield on March 6, 1848, to vote on the article. There is nothing on the subject in his surviving correspondence. Some of Lincoln's friends and political associates, however, were members of the convention, and many of his Springfield neighbors did vote on the constitution — and on Article 14, which was submitted separately for a vote — in the spring of 1848. The record of the convention and of the votes of his Springfield friends goes a long way towards dashing any argument that Abraham Lincoln's racial views were deeply rooted in Western negrophobia.

Benjamin Bond was a Whig, but his resolution stirred plenty of opposition among fellow Whig delegates to the constitutional convention. Stephen Trigg Logan, who had been Lincoln's law partner three years before, was one of the Whig delegates who had doubts about the resolution. "It was a subject of a good deal of delicacy," he suggested, "and one upon which it was difficult at all times clearly to distinguish between judgement and prejudice." John M. Palmer, a Democrat, detested "one idea" reformers, but "Every impulse of his heart and every feeling of his, was in opposition to slavery." Agitation of the subject blocked quiet movements to ameliorate the slaves' condition and "remove the great stain of moral guilt now upon this great republic." The proposition, therefore, should not be in the constitution. Logan, too,

wanted to leave the proposition out, in part because he "respected the abolitionists and believed them to be honest and sincere." Stephen A. Hurlbut, a Whig like Logan, "never would consent to" the proposition.

Lincoln's brother-in-law Ninian Wirt Edwards was also a member of the convention. A month after Bond offered his resolution, Edwards suggested a cleverly thought out amendment to the proposed bill of rights:

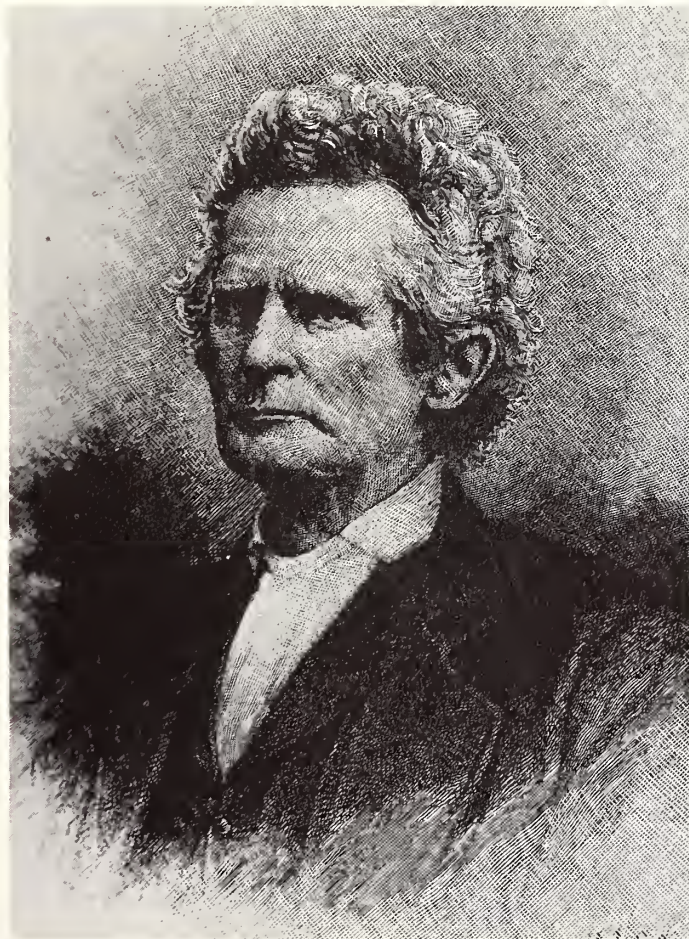
Whereas, so much of section nineteen of the bill of rights as provides for the restriction upon blacks, in connection with certain civil rights, privileges and immunities, is an implied admission of their possession of such rights, as citizens of this state and the United States, in the absence

of such constitutional restrictions; and, *whereas*, the directions therein given to the Legislature presupposes that any portion of the people of this state would be in favor of conferring such rights and privileges (as is therein denied) to colored people; and *whereas*, the Legislature would have no power to allow to persons of color to hold office and without any constitutional prohibition have already passed laws with severe penalties, not only making intermarriage and marriage contracts between them and the whites a criminal offence, but null and void, therefore,

Resolved, That said article be committed to the committee on Revision with instructions to omit so much of said section as refers to persons of color.

Springfield voted overwhelmingly to bar entry of Negroes into Illinois, 774-148. The minuscule 16% minority which defied prejudice, however, contained a number of people whose names are quite familiar to Lincoln students.

STEPHEN TRIGG LOGAN was true to his stand at the convention. On voting day he voted against the exclusion clause. A Kentuckian, like Lincoln, Logan had been Lincoln's law partner from 1841 to 1844, when the partnership was amicably dissolved so that Logan could bring his son David



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 1. Stephen Trigg Logan grew timid in old age, but in 1848 he said "no."

into his firm. Lincoln and Logan were close associates in the Whig party in the 1840s, and Logan would be the Whig candidate for Lincoln's Congressional seat the next August.

NINIAN WIRT EDWARDS was also true to his position at the convention and voted against the exclusion clause. Edwards, also a Kentuckian by birth, had married Mary Todd Lincoln's sister Elizabeth in 1832. Edwards was also a Whig, though his political views differed considerably in tone from Lincoln's. Usher F. Linder recalled that the socially prominent Edwards hated "democracy . . . as the devil is said to hate holy water." In August he would run for the Illinois House of Representatives.

ANSON G. HENRY, who was one of Lincoln's closest political associates in the 1840s as well as his doctor, voted against the clause barring Negroes from Illinois. Lincoln and Henry were perhaps the most organization-minded Whigs in the state, and the doctor was a tireless letter-writer and political worker. Henry had been born in Richfield, New York, but had lived in Illinois since the early 1830s. Later in 1848, he and Lincoln would stump the district for Zachary Taylor.

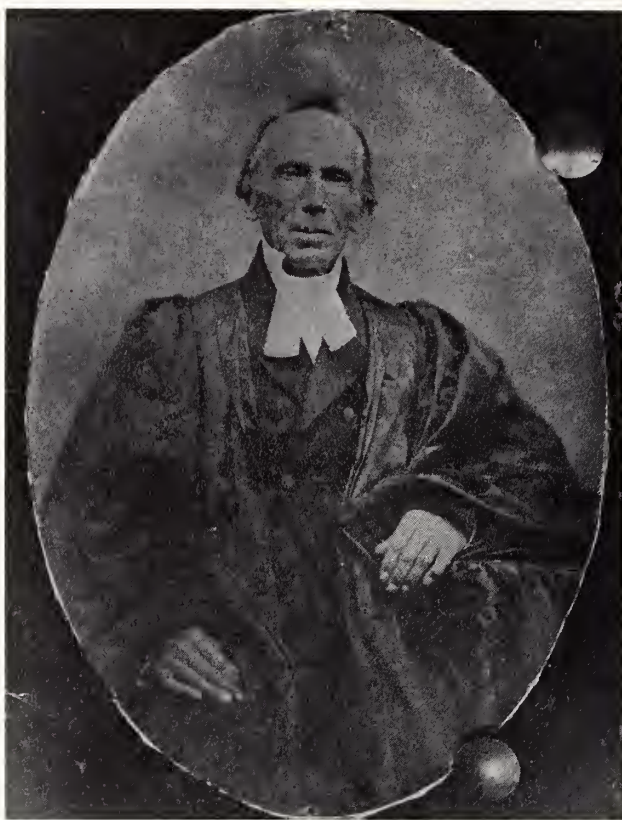
SIMEON FRANCIS, who also voted against the exclusion clause, was the editor of Springfield's Whig newspaper, the *Illinois State Journal*. After what Lincoln referred to as the fatal first of January, 1841, Mrs. Francis had been instrumental in getting Lincoln and Mary Todd back together again. Simeon Francis frequently opened the *Journal's* pages to Lincoln. He had been born in Connecticut, but he moved to Springfield in 1831. By 1848 he was thinking of moving to Oregon, and a year later Lincoln would seek his appointment as Secretary of Oregon Territory from the Taylor administration.

JAMES COOK CONKLING, another opponent of the exclusion clause, was a Princeton graduate, born in New York City. When he moved to Springfield in 1838, he very quickly moved into genteel society. He married Mercy Ann Levering, one of Mary Todd Lincoln's best friends. A Whig in politics, Conkling had been elected mayor of Springfield in 1844.



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 2. John Todd Stuart abstained.



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 3. The Reverend Charles Dresser abstained.

JAMES HARVEY MATHENY was also a Whig associate of Lincoln's. He was probably the best man at Lincoln's wedding in 1842. In 1858 Stephen A. Douglas would call Matheny, Lincoln's "especial confidential friend for the last twenty years." He was an Illinois native.

ALBERT TAYLOR BLEDSOE was the chief editorial writer for the *Illinois State Journal* while Lincoln was in Congress. Born in Kentucky, he was a West Point graduate, an Episcopal minister at one time, and, for a time, the law partner of Lincoln's friend Edward D. Baker. A Whig in politics, Bledsoe would move from Springfield later in 1848 to take up residence in Mississippi, where his racial views would change a great deal.

BENJAMIN S. EDWARDS voted, as his brother Ninian Wirt did, against the exclusion article. A Yale graduate, his legal career had brought him many of the same acquaintances Lincoln had. After studying law in New Haven, he read law in Stephen T. Logan's office, was briefly associated with Edward D. Baker, and in 1843 became John Todd Stuart's partner. Stuart had been Lincoln's first law partner. Edwards was a Whig.

Some people who voted for the constitution did not vote on the Negro exclusion clause. The meaning of an abstention on this issue is not altogether clear, but it shows at least a lack of aggressive prejudice, a willingness not to bait the race issue, and a contentment with leaving the free Negro alone.

JOHN TODD STUART abstained on the exclusion article. A Kentuckian who became Lincoln's political mentor in the Illinois Legislature, Stuart was also the man who encouraged Lincoln to study law. Thereafter, he showed his faith in the New Salem railsplitter by taking him as his partner.

CHARLES DRESSER also abstained from voting on the exclusion article. Born in Connecticut, he became Springfield's Episcopal Rector in 1838. On November 4, 1842, he solemnized the marriage vows of Abraham Lincoln and Mary Todd.



From the Louis A. Warren
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FIGURE 4. John M. Palmer.

Not all of the voters against the Negro exclusion clause were Whigs or friends of Abraham Lincoln, of course. Peter Cartwright, an ardent Democrat whom Lincoln had defeated in his race for Congress in 1846, voted against the article. And John Calhoun, another Democrat who had appointed the penniless Lincoln as his deputy surveyor in New Salem, abstained from voting on the article.

Nor were Lincoln's personal and political friends unanimous in their opposition to the exclusion of free Negroes from Illinois.

WILLIAM HENRY HERNDON voted for the exclusion article. At the time of the vote, he was Lincoln's law partner and enthusiastic Whig ally. They were having a dispute, however, over Lincoln's opposition to the Mexican War. Herndon could not understand Lincoln's stand in a constitutional, moral, or political sense, though Lincoln sent him letter after letter explaining his position.

DAVID LOGAN did not vote the way his father Stephen Trigg Logan voted. He supported the exclusion of Negroes from the state.

WILLIAM BUTLER, famed for his ability to predict the outcome of elections, was born in Kentucky. A friend of Stephen T. Logan's, he was an active Whig and a political associate of Lincoln's. He supported the exclusion article.

The preponderance in number as well as in importance in Lincoln's life lay with those who opposed the exclusion article. Lincoln's friends opposed it, though there were significant exceptions — most notably, William Herndon.

The vote on this constitutional article is not a reliable predictor of later political behavior. Hurlbut became a Republican and was entrusted by Lincoln in 1861 with a delicate information-gathering mission to South Carolina. Palmer also became a Republican and a sturdy supporter of Lincoln's political career. Lincoln in turn made him a brigadier general. Other members of the constitutional convention who protested anti-black legislation had very different political careers. Edwards became a Democrat — a move that shocked Lincoln — and he opposed Lincoln's

election in 1860. Logan's politics during the Lincoln administration were murky. Herndon said that he was like other "monied men": "old & timid — disturbed and terrified." During Reconstruction he became a Democrat, though he later returned to the Republican fold.

Simeon Francis, Anson Henry, and James Cook Conkling became Republicans. Conkling was staunchly antislavery and told President Lincoln of his hope that Union military victories would leave "no question as to the condition and rights of 'American citizens of African descent.'"

Matheny, on the other hand, dragged his feet in becoming a Republican, entering the party much later than Lincoln. Edwards became a Republican in 1856, but he switched to the Democratic party a year later. Albert Taylor Bledsoe, far from becoming a Republican, grew gradually to advocate slavery as biblically justified. He was the Assistant Secretary of War of the Confederate States of America!

The complexities of American politics in the middle of the nineteenth century prevent attaching any clear racial views to those of Lincoln's friends who opposed the exclusion article. Their later political views were not necessarily consistent with a friendly stance towards the Negro. Moreover, the extremism of the article probably caused some to doubt its constitutionality, no matter what their sentiments on racial questions. Still, the mass of voters certainly did not think it extreme, and over 80% of Springfield's citizens supported it. To be a part of so small a minority in opposition was a significant, even heroic, act.

Editor's Note: Archivist Dean DeBolt of the Sangamon State University Library generously sent microfilmed copies of the poll books on which this article is based.

R. GERALD McMURTRY LECTURES PUBLICATIONS AVAILABLE

Printed copies of the 1979 R. Gerald McMurry Lecture, Don E. Fehrenbacher's *The Minor Affair: An Adventure in Forgery and Detection*, are available on request. A few copies of the 1978 lecture, Richard N. Current's *Unity, Ethnicity, & Abraham Lincoln*, are still available as well. Requests will be filled as long as supplies last.

THE MINOR AFFAIR An Adventure in Forgery and Detection

DON E.
FEHRENBACHER

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against the United States, within the counties of Acomac and Northampton, laid down their arms upon certain terms then proposed to them by Genl. Dix, in and by a certain proclamation. It is now said that these persons or some of them, are about to be forced into the military lines of the existing rebellion, unless they will take an oath prescribed to them since, and not included in, Gen. Dix' proclamation referred to. Now, my judgment is that no one of these men should be forced from his home, who has not broken faith with the government, according to the terms fixed by Gen. Dix and these men. It is bad faith in the government to force new terms upon such as have kept faith with it. At least so it seems to me.

To James C. Conkling ✓

Hon. James C. Conkling
My Dear Sir.

Executive Mansion,
Washington, August 26, 1863.

Your letter inviting me to attend a mass-meeting of unconditional Union-men, to be held at the Capital of Illinois, on the 3d day of September, has been received.

It would be very agreeable to me, to thus meet my old friends, at my own home; but I can not, just now, be absent from here, so long as a visit there, would require.

The meeting is to be of all those who maintain unconditional devotion to the Union; and I am sure my old political friends will thank me for tendering, as I do, the nation's gratitude to those other noble men, whom no partizan malice, or partizan hope, can make false to the nation's life.

There are those who are dissatisfied with me. To such I would say: You desire peace; and you blame me that we do not have it. But how can we attain it? There are but three conceivable ways. First, to suppress the rebellion by force of arms. This, I am trying to do. Are you for it? If you are, so far we are agreed. If you are not for it, a second way is, to give up the Union. I am against this. Are you for it? If you are, you should say so plainly. If you are not for *force*, nor yet for *dissolution*, there only remains some imaginable

READ BY CONKLING ON 9/3/1863!

compromise. I do not believe any compromise, embracing the maintenance of the Union, is now possible. All I learn, leads to a directly opposite belief. The strength of the rebellion, is its military—its army. That army dominates all the country, and all the people, within its range. Any offer of terms made by any man or men within that range, in opposition to that army, is simply nothing for the present; because such man or men, have no power whatever to enforce their side of a compromise, if one were made with them. To illustrate—Suppose refugees from the South, and peace men of the North, get together in convention, and frame and proclaim a compromise embracing a restoration of the Union; in what way can that compromise be used to keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania? Meade's army can keep Lee's army out of Pennsylvania; and, I think, can ultimately drive it out of existence. But no paper compromise, to which the controllers of Lee's army are not agreed, can, at all, affect that army. In an effort at such compromise we should waste time, which the enemy would improve to our disadvantage; and that would be all. A compromise, to be effective, must be made either with those who control the rebel army, or with the people first liberated from the domination of that army, by the success of our own army. Now allow me to assure you, that no word or intimation, from that rebel army, or from any of the men controlling it, in relation to any peace compromise, has ever come to my knowledge or belief. All charges and insinuations to the contrary, are deceptive and groundless. And I promise you, that if any such proposition shall hereafter come, it shall not be rejected, and kept a secret from you. I freely acknowledge myself the servant of the people, according to the bond of service—the United States constitution; and that, as such, I am responsible to them.

But, to be plain, you are dissatisfied with me about the negro. Quite likely there is a difference of opinion between you and myself upon that subject. I certainly wish that all men could be free, while I suppose you do not. Yet I have neither adopted, nor proposed any measure, which is not consistent with even your view, provided you are for the Union. I suggested compensated emancipation; to which you replied you wished not to be taxed to buy negroes. But I had not

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asked you to be taxed to buy negroes, except in such way, as to save you from greater taxation to save the Union exclusively by other means.

You dislike the emancipation proclamation; and, perhaps, would have it retracted. You say it is unconstitutional—I think differently. I think the constitution invests its commander-in-chief, with the law of war, in time of war. The most that can be said, if so much, is, that slaves are property. Is there—has there ever been—any question that by the law of war, property, both of enemies and friends, may be taken when needed? And is it not needed whenever taking it, helps us, or hurts the enemy? Armies, the world over, destroy enemies' property when they can not use it; and even destroy their own to keep it from the enemy. Civilized belligerents do all in their power to help themselves, or hurt the enemy, except a few things regarded as barbarous or cruel. Among the exceptions are the massacre of vanquished foes, and non-combatants, male and female.

But the proclamation, as law, either is valid, or is not valid. If it is not valid, it needs no retraction. If it is valid, it can not be retracted, any more than the dead can be brought to life. Some of you profess to think its retraction would operate favorably for the Union. Why better *after* the retraction, than *before* the issue? There was more than a year and a half of trial to suppress the rebellion before the proclamation issued, the last one hundred days of which passed under an explicit notice that it was coming, unless averted by those in revolt, returning to their allegiance. The war has certainly progressed as favorably for us, since the issue of the proclamation as before. I know as fully as one can know the opinions of others, that some of the commanders of our armies in the field who have given us our most important successes, believe the emancipation policy, and the use of colored troops, constitute the heaviest blow yet dealt to the rebellion; and that, at least one of those important successes, could not have been achieved when it was, but for the aid of black soldiers. Among the commanders holding these views are some who have never had any affinity with what is called abolitionism, or with republican party politics; but who hold them purely as military opinions. I submit these opinions as being entitled to some

weight against the objections, often urged, that emancipation, and arming the blacks, are unwise as military measures, and were not adopted, as such, in good faith.

You say you will not fight to free negroes. Some of them seem willing to fight for you; but, no matter. Fight you, then, exclusively to save the Union. I issued the proclamation on purpose to aid you in saving the Union. Whenever you shall have conquered all resistance to the Union, if I shall urge you to continue fighting, it will be an apt time, then, for you to declare you will not fight to free negroes.

I thought that in your struggle for the Union, to whatever extent the negroes should cease helping the enemy, to that extent it weakened the enemy in his resistance to you. Do you think differently? I thought that whatever negroes can be got to do as soldiers, leaves just so much less for white soldiers to do, in saving the Union. Does it appear otherwise to you? But negroes, like other people, act upon motives. Why should they do any thing for us, if we will do nothing for them? If they stake their lives for us, they must be prompted by the strongest motive—even the promise of freedom. And the promise being made, must be kept.

The signs look better. The Father of Waters again goes unvexed to the sea. Thanks to the great North-West for it. Nor yet wholly to them. Three hundred miles up, they met New-England, Empire, Key-Stone, and Jersey, hewing their way right and left. The Sunny South too, in more colors than one, also lent a hand. On the spot, their part of the history was jotted down in black and white. The job was a great national one; and let none be banned who bore an honorable part in it. And while those who have cleared the great river may well be proud, even that is not all. It is hard to say that anything has been more bravely, and well done, than at Antietam, Murfreesboro, Gettysburg, and on many fields of lesser note. Nor must Uncle Sam's Web-feet be forgotten. At all the watery margins they have been present. Not only on the deep sea, the broad bay, and the rapid river, but also up the narrow muddy bayou, and wherever the ground was a little damp, they have been, and made their tracks. Thanks to all. For the great republic—for the principle it lives by, and keeps alive—for man's vast future,—thanks to all.

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Peace does not appear so distant as it did. I hope it will come soon, and come to stay; and so come as to be worth the keeping in all future time. It will then have been proved that, among free men, there can be no successful appeal from the ballot to the bullet; and that they who take such appeal are sure to lose their case, and pay the cost. And then, there will be some black men who can remember that, with silent tongue, and clenched teeth, and steady eye, and well-poised bayonet, they have helped mankind on to this great consummation; while, I fear, there will be some white ones, unable to forget that, with malignant heart, and deceitful speech, they have strove to hinder it.

Still let us not be over-sanguine of a speedy final triumph. Let us be quite sober. Let us diligently apply the means, never doubting that a just God, in his own good time, will give us the rightful result. Yours very truly

To George G. Meade

Major General Meade
Warrenton Va

Washington, D.C.,
August 27 1863

Walter, Rainese, Faline, Lae, & Kuhne appeal to me for mercy, without giving any ground for it whatever. I understand these are very flagrant cases, and that you deem their punishment as being indispensable to the service. If I am not mistaken in this, please let them know at once that their appeal is denied.

To William S. Rosecrans

Executive Mansion, Washington,
My dear General Rosecrans August 31. 1863.

Yours of the 22nd. was received yesterday. When I wrote you before, I did not intend, nor do I now, to engage in an argument with you on military questions. You had informed me you were impressed, through Gen. Halleck, that I was dissatisfied with you; and I could not bluntly deny that I was, without unjustly implicating him. I therefore concluded to tell you the plain truth, being satisfied the matter would thus

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would fight and die for the Union and for their liberty. When the North discovered that Confederates had tossed Shaw's body into the pit dug for dead blacks and had told the Yankees, "We have buried him with his niggers!" resentment and outrage joined admiration to challenge Democratic racist politicking.¹²

Republican organization played its crucial role in the elections of 1863, with the president quietly using his influence to implement both the dark and the brighter forces of Republican party campaigning. The party's major instrument was the Union League. Organized in the early days of the war and then in the border states by 1862 to defend the administration and the Union cause, these leagues had grown lethargic in the aftermath of the electoral successes by Democrats. But early in 1863 they were reviving again because of the energetic efforts of Lincoln's supporters and friends. The governor of Illinois, Richard Yates, was especially encouraging, faced as he was with a Democratic majority in the state legislature by January 1863. He put the authority and resources of the governor's office and of the Republican party behind the league and helped to send agents to other midwestern states. Lincoln's old friends and associates began to appear in local leagues; the Springfield branch gained membership and influence when Lincoln's friend James Conkling became president. Midwestern Republican governors started using the league to checkmate Democratic opposition. In Indiana Oliver Morton launched his state's league with a large "gift" from a banker friend to organize and recruit new league members, and state locals began to emerge. Michigan and Iowa also saw league popularity grow, but Illinois still led the way. Over 140,000 members had joined as 1863 ended.¹³

The big cities saw similar growth. Boston, Philadelphia, and especially New York City had active Republican elites who gave money and time to the revitalized coalition. They organized Union Leagues, subsidized public meetings and fairs, and began publishing pamphlets and broadsides that damned the Democrats and endorsed administration policies. By the time of Appomattox over 1 million copies of nearly 200 pamphlets had been distributed throughout the North by state branches of the league.¹⁴

These pamphlets set a high standard of election rhetoric. Throughout the 1863 and 1864 elections Union Leagues explained and argued constitutional questions, debated financial options, described the experiences in war of other nations, and presented the views of thoughtful writers from overseas justifying the Union cause. Women like Emma Willard, Mary Abigail Dodge, and Anna Carroll contributed to the debate. Lawyers, historians, and religious leaders joined politicians to pro-

mote the Northern cause and weapons.

At the state and local level, ever, the political propaganda of fairness or reason charges of treason and the president equaled disloyalty, and some other Confederate, and conspiracy theories could not directly be used to defeat the Democratic actions were not beyond his approval from him and tact strained. Yet with so much his party, he did not interfere with organizing secret "Union" with plans to help the Confederacy massacring Union League voters from other states stories were the Knights of the Golden other way.¹⁵

The capital had its bran-ilar pamphleteering and org-are obscure but probable. J-udent's from Illinois, was the-and began to issue charters-Edmunds contacted the mic-convention that met in Clev-ministration ties dominated-the major address; Chase se-a representative. John For-n-prominent in the conventic-the meeting publicity. Willi-sonal secretaries, became-designated the District of C-officers from the District. they reported to Washingto-the White House. This natio-publican party but one th-whelmingly. In 1864 it held-National Convention in the

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M. Current, *Lincoln the President: Midstream*, 4 vols. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1945-1954), 3: 256-62.

11. Nicolay and Hay, 6: 385-86n; Allan Nevins and Milton H. Thomas, eds., *The Diary of George Templeton Strong*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 3: 355.

12. Joseph Glatthaar, *Forged in Battle: The Civil War Alliance of Black Soldiers and White Officers* (New York: Free Press, 1990), pp. 136-42; James McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 686-87.

13. I follow here Phillip Paludan, R. Gerald McMurtry Lecture, "The Better Angels of Our Nature": Lincoln, Propaganda and Public Opinion in the North during the Civil War," *Ft. Wayne, Ind., Lincoln Museum*, published 1993.

Douglas. Lincoln's reassertion of the li-time by the sacrifices of tens of thou-closer to reality.

25. Wills, *Lincoln at Gettysburg*, pp-that the address was significantly a sta-now responsible for securing equality.

26. James M. McPherson, *Abraham-tion* (New York: Oxford University Pres-cher, "The Paradoxes of Freedom," cha-ford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, and positive liberty in Lincoln's time.

27. Phillip S. Paludan, "The Amer-

PAGE 350

LINCOLN DAY BY DAY - A CHRONOLOGY 1809-1865
VOL. II 1849-1860 by WILLIAM B. BARINGER
(EARL SCHENCK MIERS - EDITOR-IN-CHIEF) - WASHINGTON
REFERENCES TO JAMES C. CONKLING (MANY),¹⁹⁶⁰
MEACY LEVERING CONKLING, &
WILLIAM J. CONKLING (WILLIAM = 3-22-1856)

THE PRESIDENCY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN
PHILLIP SHAW PALUDAN, 1994, UNIV. PRESS OF KANSAS
PAGES 224 & 350
PAGES 224 & 350 INVOLVE LINCOLN MUSEUM,
FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

LOVE IS ETERNAL by IRVING STONE, DOUBLEDAY, 1954
PAGES 48-49, 143, 161-162, 230, 464
ALSO, A PLAY MADE ON THIS = LOVE IS ETERNAL
ON INTERNET - HAS CONKLINGS IN IT

LINCOLN: AN ILLUSTRATED BIOGRAPHY, KNOFF, NEW YORK, 1992
BY PHILIP B. KUNHARDT, JR., ET AL
PAGES 57-59, 228, 308 (EXCERPTS OF LETTERS - PGS. 58, 59)

THE ABRAHAM LINCOLN ENCYCLOPEDIA, 1982
BY MARK E. NEELY, JR., A DECAPO PAPERBACK
PAGES 68-69, 309-310
JAMES C. CONKLING & LINCOLN'S TOMB

ABRAHAM LINCOLN: SPEECHES & WRITINGS 1859-1865
BY DON E. FEHRENBACHER, 1989, LIBRARY OF AMERICA
LETTER TO JAMES C. CONKLING 8/26/1863
PAGES 495-499
LETTER TO ROBINSON ON 8/17/1864
PAGES 620-622 (ON JAMES C. CONKLING LETTER)

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PAGES 336-341 (LETTER TO JAMES C. CONKLING)

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MARY TODD LINCOLN - HER LIFE AND LETTERS
JUSTIN TURNER & LINDA LEVITT TURNER

PAGES 10-11, 17, 20-28, 31, 178, 187-188, 381, 383

PAGES 20-28 = LETTER of MARY TODD to MERCY ^{LEVERING}

MARY TODD LINCOLN, BY JEAN H. BAKER, WW NORTON & CO

PAGES 83-84, 88-91, 93-95, 101, 192, 209, 251-252

PAGES 78, 80-86, 91-92, 166, 215

SEE ALSO NOTES = 381-383, 391-395, 399, 404

MARY LINCOLN - BIOGRAPHY OF A MARRIAGE, 1953

BY RUTH PAINTER RANDALL, LITTLE BROWN & CO

PAGES 5-9, 16-19, 44, 49, 55-57, 61,

185-187, 195, 200-201, 209, 270-271,

321-322, 443

NOTES - SEE ALSO NOTES = 445, 447,

452-453, 474-475, 486, 493, 516

FORT WAYNE, INDIANA LINCOLN MUSEUM

THE PRESIDENCY OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

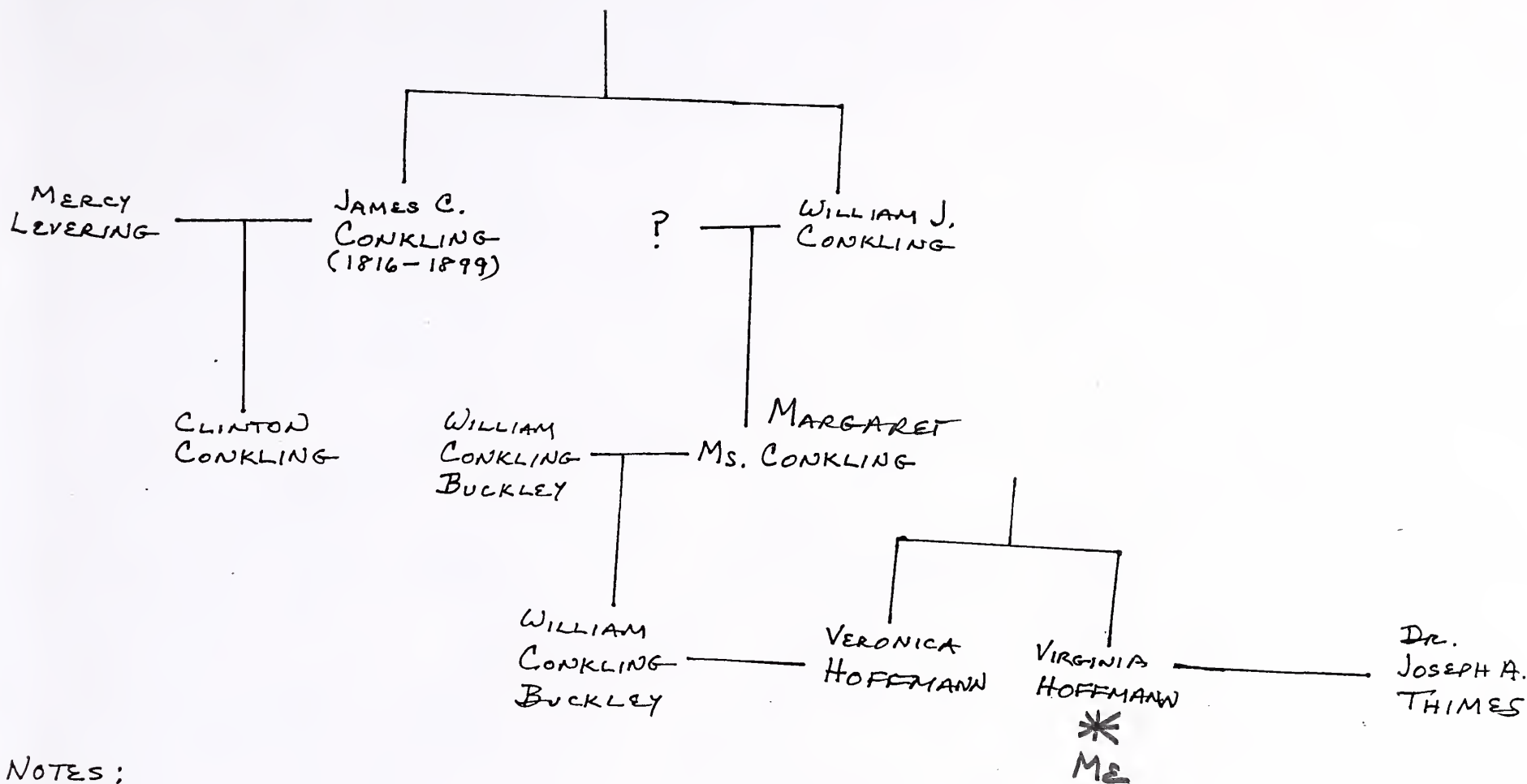
PHILLIP SHAW PALUDAN, 1994

UNIVERSITY PRESS OF KANSAS

PAGES 224 & 350 (SEE NOTE #13
OF PAGE 350)

As you might know, James Cook Conkling was born in New York City in 1816, was raised in New York, and graduated from Princeton in 1835. He moved to Springfield in 1838, was a charter member of the "coterie", and courted then married Mercy Levering in 1841. This Mercy Levering was Mary Todd's closest friend in the early 1840's. James Conkling was mayor of Springfield, an Illinois legislator, and a successful attorney. In 1863, he read Abraham Lincoln's letter to him at a massive pro-union rally in Springfield. It was this letter that helped turn around the presidency for Lincoln. In 1866, Mr. Conkling may have been involved in Taddie Lincoln's guardianship. In 1882, he was a pall bearer at Mrs Lincoln's funeral. He had a brother, William J. Conkling, who was also an attorney. The two Conklings tried a case against Lincoln-Hernden on March 22, 1856. It is through this William J. Conkling that I am related to the Conkling family.

There was a very prominent US Senator from New York in the 1870's named Roscoe Conkling. This Roscoe Conkling did oppose Mrs. Lincoln's lavish dresses and pension. Also, there was a Frederick A. Conkling who was a US congressman from New York in 1862. As the above James C. Conkling was originally from New York, I am wondering if he might have been related to either Roscoe or Frederick Conkling. This might lead to some interesting information. Apparently, Roscoe Conkling might have been a friend of Robert Lincoln, son of Abraham Lincoln.



NOTES:

MERCY LEVERING - CLOSEST FRIEND OF
MARY TODD (MRS. ABRAHAM LINCOLN)
IN EARLY 1840'S.

JAMES C. CONKLING - CLOSE FRIEND OF
BOTH ABRAHAM LINCOLN & MARY TODD

CLINTON CONKLING - CLOSE FRIEND OF ROBERT LINCOLN (SON OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN)

I do have almost all of the below Conkling information from books about Mr. And Mrs. Abraham Lincoln, official histories of Sangamon County in Illinois, and some interesting information via internet. I did save by websites. I find excerpts about the Lincolns from early letters written by Mr. And Mrs. James C. Conkling (also, some letters written by Mary Todd Lincoln to Mercy Levering—wife of James Conkling). The famous and long letter written by Abraham Lincoln to James Conkling is very interesting on war tactics, etc. I have included some information on key Conkling figures.

In Springfield, Illinois, the Cook house is located next to Abraham Lincoln's home. While I don't think there is a relationship, would the Cook's of this home be related to James Cook Conkling? The spelling is the same.

James C. Cook was born and raised in New York (1816 to 1835) and moved to Springfield in 1838. While this may be a long shot, would possibly James C. Conkling possibly be related to Frederick A. Conkling (a US Congressman from New York in 1862) or even to the powerful Roscoe Conkling (US Congressman 1859 to 1865 and US Senator at least from 1870 to 1879. He was from New York also)?

CONKLING FAMILY

This Conkling family originated from Nottinghamshire, England. They moved to Salem, Massachusetts in 1638, then moved to Southold, Long Island, New York in 1650, then moved to Baskingridge, New Jersey in 1690. Some of the Conklings served in the Revolutionary War.

JAMES C. CONKLING (1816 - 1899)

James C. Conkling was the son of Stephen Conkling (born in 1788) and Sarah Belknap. James Conkling was born and raised in New York and graduated from Princeton in 1835. He moved to Springfield in 1838 and became a close, lifetime friend of Abe Lincoln. Some of his letters on Abe Lincoln were interesting. He married Mercy Ann Riggs Levering in September 1841. He was a lawyer and politician and became mayor of Springfield in 1844-1845. He was in the Illinois Legislature in 1851 and 1867 and helped make Springfield the state capitol. In 1856, he became the Illinois Republican Party chairman. In 1860, he gave the dedication speech for the Oak Ridge Cemetery at Springfield. He was a presidential elector in 1860 and 1864. Lincoln was with Conkling on the evening of the 1860 presidential nomination. The famous long letter of Abraham Lincoln dated August 26, 1863 was read by James C. Conkling to a massive union rally at Springfield of 50,000 to 75,000 people on September 3, 1863. This letter was on war tactics and use of negro troops. James Conkling gave the eulogy speech on Lincoln when Lincoln was finally interred at Oak Ridge Cemetery. James Conkling was with the Lincoln Monument Association for many years, was a pall-bearer at Mary Todd Lincoln's funeral in 1882, and became postmaster of Springfield in 1890.

MERCY LEVERING

Mercy Levering was born in 1817 and was the best friend & confidant to Mary Todd before she married Abraham Lincoln. Some of her letters about the Lincolns were interesting. She married James C. Conkling in September 1841.

CLINTON LEVERING CONKLING

Clinton Conkling was born in 1843 and was the son of James C. Conkling and Mercy Levering. His home is now a Springfield landmark. He attended Yale and became a lawyer in 1866. Clinton Conkling was on the board of supervisors of Sangamon County for 9 years, was corporation council of city of Springfield from 1898 to 1902, and served as the secretary of Lincoln Monument Association for many years (in 1901, Clinton Conkling certified that the remains were that of Abe Lincoln). Clinton Conkling was a good friend of Robert Lincoln (son of Abraham Lincoln) as both Clinton and Robert both criticized the poor workmanship of Barnard's statue of Abraham Lincoln in 1917 (this was very controversial).

WILLIAM J. CONKLING (1826 - 1904)

He was the son of Stephen Conkling (born in 1788) and Sarah Belknap and also the brother of James C. Conkling above. In 1853, he apprenticed in law with his brother and became a bar member in 1854. William Conkling was a lawyer and was also heavy into real estate as an agent. He tried a case against Lincoln (case vs Virden on March 22, 1856. He was a public administrator named by each governor from 1876 to 1904.

WILLIAM H. CONKLING

He was born in 1858 and was the son of William J. Conkling. In 1893, he helped to erect Springfield city hall and was comptroller of Springfield in 1897 to 1901. At one time, he owned Wolf Batter & Furrier business in Springfield. He became assistant postmaster of Springfield in 1901. Per internet: by 1926, he was postmaster of ~~St. Louis, Lindbergh~~ ^{SPRINGFIELD} Missouri. In 1926, he was helping the CAM-2 flights of Lindbergh & Lambert on postal flights from St. Louis to Springfield. Mr. Conkling had a letter of his carried by Lindbergh on Lindbergh's famous 1927 trans-Atlantic flight (the Smithsonian was interested in obtaining this letter).

ROSCOE CONKLING

Roscoe Conkling was a US Congressman 1859-1863 and 1863-1865 from New York. He was a powerful US senator from New York in 1870 to 1879 at least. In 1870, he opposed any pension to Mrs. Lincoln. In 1879, he had a possible extramarital affair with Kate Chase Sprague, wife of the ex-senator Sprague. Mr Sprague supposedly threatened Roscoe Conkling with a gun on this issue

